Traditionally organizations were designed to achieve specific goals:
- Firms to maximize profits,
- Universities to discover and propagate knowledge,
- Governments to promote social welfare,
- Non-profits to serve their designated ends.

However, as we come to understand the essential interconnectedness of our world, we need to reorient our social organizations to jointly pursue their original goals while simultaneously minimizing their impact on the world through their use of energy, water, and natural resources. Whether environmental and social impact are core to their mission or unintentionally affected by their operations and supply chain, we recognize that these organizations must have sustainability as a key concern in their strategies.

How do we reform the functions of our social organizations to account for sustainability issues? How do we decide about moral imperatives versus trade-offs against their original missions? Or when can accounting for sustainability concerns actually directly enhance an organization’s primary mission? Firms that "go green" often achieve gains from reducing energy costs, gathering public goodwill, avoiding liability, and preserving the value of their lands. Governments that undertake green initiatives similarly can reduce their direct energy costs while simultaneously achieving gains in other areas of concern, such as public health. Certainly universities such as Northwestern are focused on sustainability for cost reasons, for publicity reasons, and certainly because we hope that through the debates we have and the example we set, we create knowledge about what works, and spread these findings to our students and the surrounding community.

But understanding sustainability in an evolving landscape of stakeholder expectations, complex regulations, and emerging technologies can be challenging and even the best managed organizations have struggled to maximize the gains that can be derived from sustainability.

This course will examine how organizations across a variety of sectors have approached sustainability. We will examine how sustainability affects almost every organization throughout its operations and learn how to apply an "enterprise-wide" approach when developing a sustainability strategy which maximizes environmental and economic benefits.

Specifically, we will address the following questions:

1. What is "sustainability" and how does it affect organizations across industries and operating models?
2. What are the drivers of sustainability policy and regulation, market forces and stakeholder demands?
3. How can using a ‘sustainable’ lens improve performance regardless of mission or structure?
4. Why should sustainability be a key element of strategy across all types of organizations?
5. What is a strategic approach to Sustainability? What does it mean to take on an “enterprise-wide” approach to developing a sustainability strategy?
6. What organizations are leaders in sustainability? What are the commonalities between them?
7. How can you use a structured approach to improving the sustainability of any organization?

This course aims to provide students with:
- A bridge between sustainability in science and theory and applications in organizational strategy
- A forum for moderated discussions about sustainability, how it influences organizational strategy and how that has evolved
- An opportunity to interact with sustainability leadership from local organizations as well as consultants and professionals in sustainability and energy including non-profit, local government
and private sector organizations.

The course is presented in the following sequence:

**Weeks 1-4  **  **Part I: Sustainability and Organizations**
Topics include: Definition of sustainability; global drivers of sustainability; and, impacts for organizations- global trends, policy and regulation and other market forces
Case studies: Toyota (evolution from regulation and compliance to products)
Guest speakers (proposed): Howard Learner- Environmental Law and Policy Center; Jim Cahan –Sidley Austin; Peter Nicholson – Executive Director of the Foresight Design Initiative

**Weeks 5-7  **  **Part II: Sustainability and Organizational Strategy**
Topics include: Organizational strategy and the intersection of sustainability; mission and values; products and services; cost and risk reductions; brand and shareholder value goals and sustainability; performance management; communications and reporting; and, building a culture of sustainability
Case studies: City of Chicago, McDonalds, Exelon
Guest speakers (proposed): Karen Weigert- City of Chicago, Bob Langert- CSO McDonalds

**Weeks 8-10  **  **Part III: A Strategic Approach to Sustainability**
Topics include: Using a structured approach to creating, implementing and evaluating sustainability strategy; Northwestern University's approach to developing a sustainability plan; and, the future of sustainability for organizations.
Case studies: Comerica Bank, GE ecomagination, Northwestern University
Guest speakers (proposed): Chris Park- Deloitte Sustainability and Climate Change; Kyle Tangert, Wal-Mart

**Time:** Weekly 3-hour evening class consisting of a mix of lectures, case discussions, and guest speakers.

**Text:** There is no text book for this class. Suggested reading includes “Green to Gold” by Don Esty and Andrew Winston; and “Strategy for Sustainability – A Business Manifesto” by Adam Werbach. Other text will include timely articles/publications in the field of study and publications provided by class speakers. Proposed speakers include chief sustainability officers from the public and private sectors; and consultants in sustainability and energy (as listed above).

**Course Grade:**
- Case Studies (40%) – short group/individual sustainability mini-case write ups (4-6 pages).
- Class Participation (20%) – in-class case discussion and lectures.
- Group Project (40%) – In class presentation and write-ups of where students will demonstrate their ability to use the approach described in class to create an “enterprise-wide’ strategy for an organization of their choice.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Associated Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how sustainability creates value for corporations</td>
<td>Case write-ups, presentations, group project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize sustainability &quot;leaders&quot; and explore how these organizations sustainability strategies were started and fostered</td>
<td>Case write-ups, speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a structured approach to creating a sustainability program- assessing areas of opportunity, creating a vision and goals, building a culture of sustainability</td>
<td>Case write-ups, presentations, group project</td>
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**Instructor:** Rob Whittier, Director of the Office of Sustainability, Northwestern University